

**BATTLE CREEK CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, May 28, 2014**

1. Call to Order:

Chairperson Daniel Buscher called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and welcomed a new Planning Commission member, Mr. Scott Parker and appreciates his service to the city.

2. Attendance:

Members Present:

Susan Baldwin	John Godfrey	Chip Spranger
Steve Barker	Dean Newsome	John Stetler
Dan Buscher	Scott Parker	

Members Excused: Alyssa Jones

Staff Present: Christine Hilton, Planning Supervisor
Glenn Perian, Senior Planner
Leona Parrish, Administrative Assistant, Planning Dept.

3. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda: None

4. Approval of Minutes: Meeting Minutes of March 26, 2014.

MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER GODFREY, SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER SPRANGER, TO APPROVE THE PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FOR MARCH 26, 2014 AS PRESENTED.

VOTE ON MOTION: ALL IN FAVOR; NONE OPPOSED; MOTION CARRIED.

5. Correspondence: None

6. Public Hearings and Deliberation/Recommendations: No Public Hearing was held as it was not warranted for today's meeting agenda items.

7. Old Business: None

8. New Business:

- A. 2013 Annual Report:** Ms. Christine Hilton stated it is a requirement by State Law that an annual summary report be done of the Planning Departments yearly activities and submitted to the members; explained the reports consisted of the Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals and Historic District Commission applications that the Planning Department facilitate etc., and also includes the day-to-day activities and noted the annual report does not require approval.

Commissioner Buscher referenced page 19 of page 21 of the 2013 Annual Report and asked why was it noted pending (DPW) for items #10, #15 & #18. Ms. Hilton stated the

Department of Public Works (DPW) are still reviewing those items and have asked for a resubmittal of plans for items #10 “Magna Cosma” at Fort Custer Industrial Park. This is a big project site where work is needed to be done regarding the street to widen curb lanes due to a hill making it difficult for trucks to go into and out of that site and also convert that property to its new use; item #15 “Planet Rock” has storm water issues; and item #18 “Psychological Consulting” have also storm water issues and are waiting for all three to resubmit plans.

- B. Departmental Projects:** Christine Hilton explained the Planning Department Project sheet hand-out which outlines the work currently being done of on-going projects and daily routine work. Stated a lot of the projects are above and beyond the day-to-day activities of the department and at times there are some conflicting time constraints that unfortunately do not allow them to get through every single thing, also on any given day there are projects added to the list. Noted the ones with a bullet point are on-going and always being worked on; the items with a red star or asterisk are things that are on the table for them to look at but are on dependent upon a Master Plan update as the current Master Plan would not support the changes they should be considering.

Commissioner Buscher asked Commissioner Stetler if he had any items to be added for review for the departmental project list and if the item he previously wanted reviewed is still being looked at by the planning department. Commissioner Stetler asked if he was referring to the zoning ordinance and if so he does not know if staff is working on it. Ms. Hilton stated his request is listed under “Zoning Ordinance Amendments” for Mixed Use Overlay Districts and/or the Form Based Code Transitional Business District. Ms. Hilton stated the current zoning ordinance is laid out where the division of land use is based on zoning district and is supported by our current Master Plan; so it is still on the list and has not been forgotten but needs to be looked at in conjunction with the Master Plan update to ensure it is specified and supported by the Master Plan.

Commissioner Baldwin made reference to page 3 “Completed Projects” stating it would be helpful if there could also be a notation regarding the outcome on the report. Ms. Hilton stated yes, and noted for example the Medical Marijuana Act has been on hold for two years and still on the main list and could be placed on the back list noting the status.

Commissioner Stetler asked what the status was regarding city owned vacant parcels. Ms. Hilton stated the city is not acquiring any new lots, that the Calhoun County acquires properties when taxes have not been paid and that they do not come to the city. Stated the parcels that we do currently own have been reviewed and approximately one-third of them were sent offers to the adjacent property owners as side lots to persons that have no code violations or taxes owed. Stated we have recently sold about 20 to 30 of those vacant lots and will probably do a second push to sell more and then probably give the rest of them to the Calhoun County Land Bank as the city is currently paying taxes on those vacant lots.

Commissioner Newsome asked regarding the red asterisk in relative to when the Comprehensive Plan for future land use will occur. Ms. Christine Hilton stated this is her third update on today’s agenda for the Master Plan Process / Update and working on an RFP for that and specifically some of the corridor changes. Said we have a Master Plan that talks about goals and objectives for the city and also talk about future land use for every

property within the city. Stated she does not anticipate many changes over how they are currently used or zoned and there does seem to be a need to look at those differently than done in the past and that any rezoning that comes through the Planning and City Commission needs to be consistent with the Master Plan and Future Land Use Map. Said as they look at updating the Master Plan within the next year; that is when they need to take a harder look at the corridors to see what can be done differently for zoning and make sure it is in the Master Plan which will guide those activities in the future to do rezoning and or redevelopment opportunities.

C. Master Plan Process / Update:

Commissioner Baldwin asked regarding the Master Plan Process and how much public input they would be seeking; referenced the Gethings example and would want good representation from the community. Ms. Hilton stated they want to have a lot of public input and will be focusing on market and community engagement and the consultant will be looking at both.

Commissioner Godfrey asked if the Master Plan will be completed by the staff or consultant. Ms. Hilton stated there will be both staff input and consultant for future land use and directives.

Commissioner Buscher asked regarding the public engagement component and do we have a timeframe for that as far as when staff will be working with the public, surveys, etc. Ms. Hilton stated they are hoping to begin this fall and need to be looking for a consultant; plan to do an RFP this month through the city and will be interviewing the top three. Stated she will be asking for three commissioners to volunteer their help with interviews of consulting firms; Commissioners Barker, Spranger, Buscher, Godfrey and Stetler volunteered.

Commissioner Baldwin asked if the Master Plan needed to be approved by the City Commission. Ms. Hilton stated yes.

Ms. Christine Hilton stated she would like to send out an email to the commissioners regarding them looking at other cities recent Master Plans format etc. to see what they might like to see in regards to how ours may be redone and provide to her that feedback. Commissioner Baldwin suggested we talk with the other cities to find out if they used an outside consultant and if so, what their experience was with them regarding their plan.

Commissioner Stetler asked what type of cooperation we are getting from our neighboring townships. Ms. Hilton stated at a minimum we would need to send out our plan to the neighboring townships for review and also offer a 60-day comment period and would like to see them invited to take part in the public engagement. Stated a lot of what they have zoned is consistent with what we have now. Commissioner Stetler asked if we will have communication with them. Ms. Hilton stated yes.

9. Comments by the Public: None

10. Comments by the Staff and Commission Members:

Commissioner Buscher stated he had an opportunity to go to South Haven this past weekend and they officially opened two-weeks ago from their project and had received a variety of grants

totaling 3.4 million. Said he tried to compare what they had done regarding paths / streets / lighting / sitting areas etc. and found it quite interesting. Noted he spoke with some of their business owners and said they suffered during the winter months, but their sales are up from last year and said hopefully that will happen in Battle Creek.

Commissioner Scott Parker stated he was happy to be on the Planning Commission and thanked everyone for their welcome.

11. **Adjournment:** Commissioner Buscher entertained a motion to adjourn today's meeting; seconded by Commissioner Godfrey. All in favor meeting was adjourned at 4:22 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted:

Christine M. Hilton, AICP
Executive Secretary, Planning Commission